GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:309
ANSWERED ON:19.07.2016
Use of Pesticides in Agriculture
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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of the excessive use of pesticides in agriculture which are adversely affecting the quality of soil in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any programme is being implemented by the Government to reduce usage of chemical pesticides in agriculture;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the mechanism established by the Government for testing and monitoring pesticides before their use for agriculture purpose?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

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(a) & (b): The Central Government monitors pesticides residues in various agricultural commodities etc. under the central scheme "Monitoring of Pesticides Residues at National Level" (MPRNL). In the previous year only 2.9 % of all the samples of commodities contained pesticide residues above the Maximum Residues Limits (MRLs) fixed by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India.

(c) & (d): The Government is implementing "Strengthening and Modernization of Pest Management Approach in India" through 35 Central Integrated Pest Management Centres (CIPMCs) of Directorate of Plant Protection Quarantine and Storage established across the country with an aim to promote Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach. CIPMCs inter alia, produce biological agents for release in the fields, conserve natural bio-control agents, promote bio-pesticides as an alternative to chemical pesticides and advocate judicious and safe use of chemical pesticides as a last resort. These activities are implemented through Farmers Field Schools (FFSs), 2 days and 5 days training programmes and season long training program for State Agriculture Extension officers and NGOs / Private Bodies. A 'Grow Safe Food' campaign has been initiated to carry the message of safe and judicious use of pesticides to farmers and other stakeholders.
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A simple message related to five essential principles of judicious pesticide use - application of pesticides on the right crop, against pests for which the pesticide has been approved, at the right time, in approved doses, and as per approved method of application - is sought to be disseminated in regional languages in Gram Panchayats and rural areas. Package of practices for control of pests and diseases in 79 crops have been revised to include techniques to reduce dependence on chemical pesticides and encourage use of bio-pesticides and other alternative plant protection measures.

(e): The Government registers pesticides only after a detailed evaluation of safety and efficacy to human, animal and environmental health. Under the Insecticides Act, 1968, evaluation is conducted on the following four parameters: (i) Chemistry (ii) Bio- efficacy (iii) Toxicity (iv) Packaging. Further, technical reviews are carried out from time to time and continued use of pesticides is permitted only if found safe.

In addition, Monitoring of quality of pesticides is a shared responsibility between the Central and State Governments. Central Government and State Governments have notified 168 and 11,229 Insecticides Inspectors respectively to check sale of misbranded pesticides. Insecticide samples are drawn on regular basis and analyzed in 68 State Pesticides Testing Laboratories (SPTLs) and at the two Regional Pesticides Testing Laboratories at Chandigarh and Kanpur. Action against misbranded Samples is initiated under the provisions of the Insecticides Act, 1968.

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